

National Interagency Coordination Center

2005 Statistics and Summary

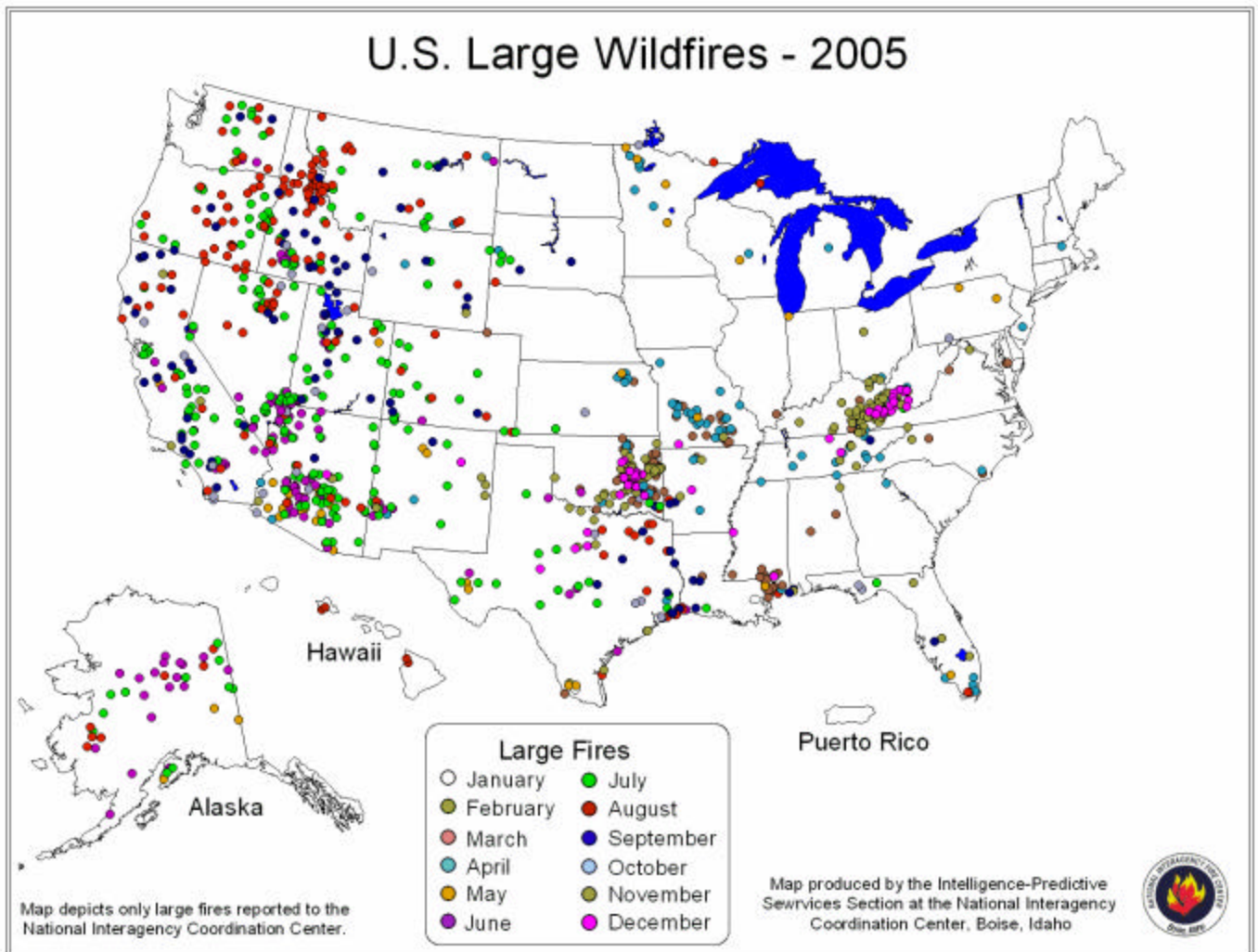




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Identifier Legend

Interagency Coordination Centers

NICC – National Interagency Coordination Center

AK - Alaska

EA - Eastern Area

EB - Eastern Great Basin

NICC - National

NO - Northern California

NR - Northern Rockies

NW - Northwest

RM - Rocky Mountain

SA - Southern Area

SO - Southern California

SW - Southwest

WB - Western Great Basin

CIFFC - Canadian Interagency Forest
Fire Centre

NIK - National Interagency Radio
Support Cache

Other:

PRI - Private

Government Agencies

Department of the Interior:

BIA - Bureau of Indian Affairs

BLM - Bureau of Land Management

FWS - Fish & Wildlife Service

NPS - National Park Service

OAS - Office of Air Services

Department of Agriculture:

FS - Forest Service

DDQ - Department of Defense

Department of Homeland Security:

FEMA - Federal Emergency
Management Agency

Department of Commerce:

WXW - National Weather Service

ST - State

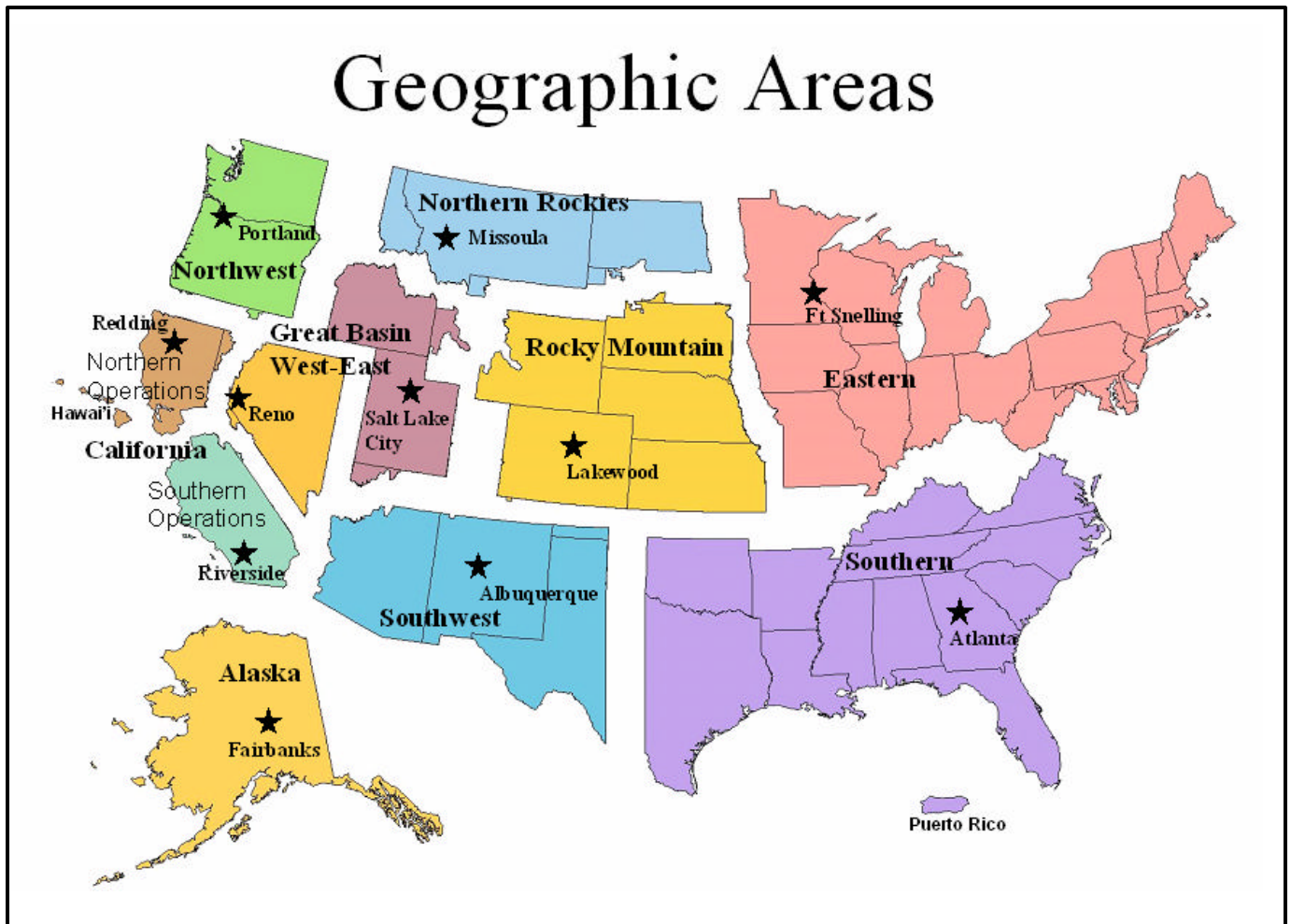
CN - Canada

Preface

All wildland fire and acreage statistics were gathered from the National Situation Report program, individual geographic area detailed Situation Reports, submitted Incident Status Summaries reports (ICS-209) and previous National Interagency Coordination Center's (NICC) annual reports. The statistics presented in this report are intended to provide a national perspective of annual fire activity. The statistics are delineated by agency and geographic areas.

For specific or more detailed information contact individual agencies.

Resource mobilization statistics used in this report were gathered from the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS), which tracks tactical, logistical, service and support resources mobilized by the national incident dispatch community. The statistics presented in this report are the resource requests that were processed through NICC and ordered by one of the eleven interagency coordination centers. The resource ordering process and procedures may be found in chapter 20 of the National Mobilization Guide. The National Mobilization Guide can be found on the NICC web site, (www.nifc.gov/news/nicc.html) under reference materials.

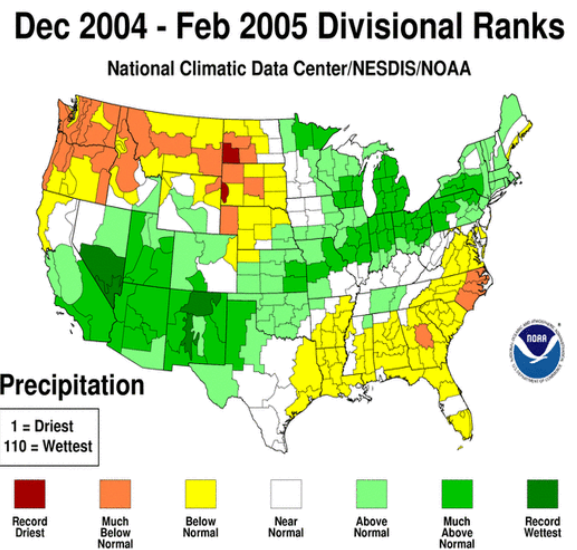
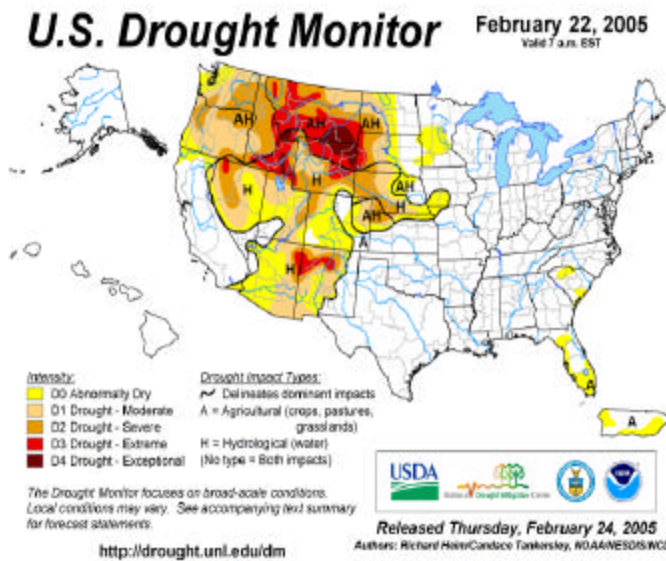


Annual Fire Summary 2005

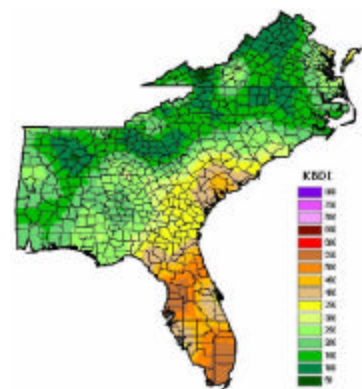
National Interagency Coordination Center 2005 Fire Season Summary

Winter (December 2004 – February 2005)

The West entered the winter of 2004-2005 after a fall that was unusually wet in the Southwest and dry in the Northwest, Northern Rockies and Southeast. Oregon, Washington and Montana reported one of the top ten driest winters on record. As a whole, the country experienced its tenth warmest winter. Alaska was also warmer than usual with snowpack at or above normal.



Initial seasonal outlook reports called for normal wildland fire activity in the Southern Area, except for southern Florida where dry conditions, past hurricane damage, and below normal long-range precipitation forecasts indicated above normal fire potential (see the January 15, 2005 Keetch-Byram Drought Index [KBDI] image at right). Texas and North Carolina were also predicted to have drier than normal conditions. In addition, another above average Atlantic hurricane season was projected for 2005. For the Eastern Area, below normal fire potential was expected for the Mid-Atlantic and a small portion of the Northeast States.



Initial attack was relatively light in January with only three large fires, two in the Southern Area in Oklahoma and Texas, and one in Maryland in the Eastern Area. Fire activity increased during February in the Southern Area with six large fires in Oklahoma, Florida, and Texas.

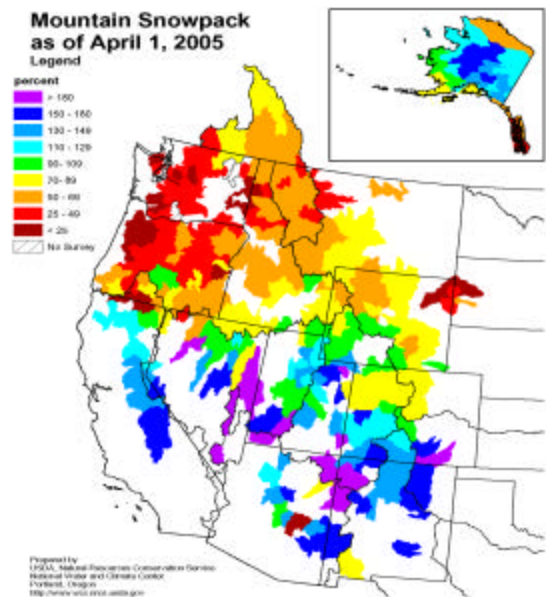
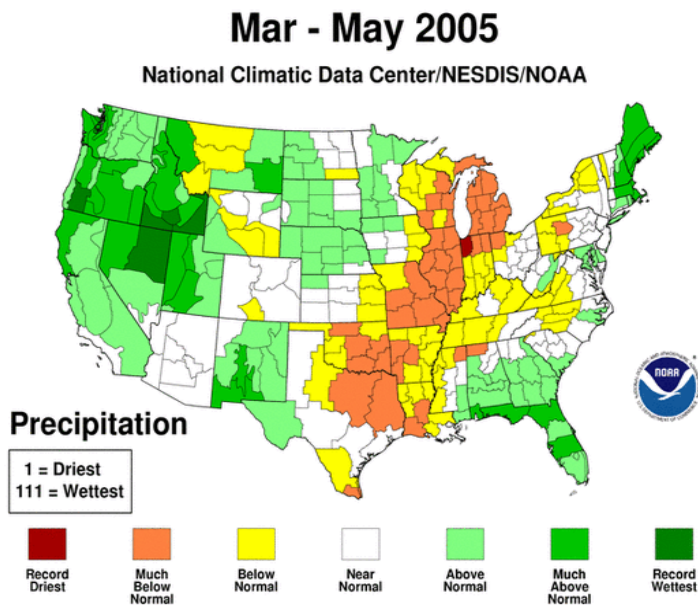
Spring (March – May)

The fire season outlook issued April 1, 2005 called for above normal large fire potential over much of the Northwest, Northern Rockies, and northern portions of the Rocky Mountain Area due to the combination of very low and some record low snowpack from the Pacific Northwest to the Dakotas and continuing drought in many areas. Above normal large fire potential was also predicted for portions of the Southwest, Great Basin, Southern California, and Eastern Areas primarily due to the abundance and continuity of grass and brush in the lower elevations. The higher elevation mountains of the Southwest were expected to have a relatively light fire season because of heavy snowpacks and high moisture content of large dead/down fuels. A broad area from Arkansas to New York was expected to have a below normal fire season.

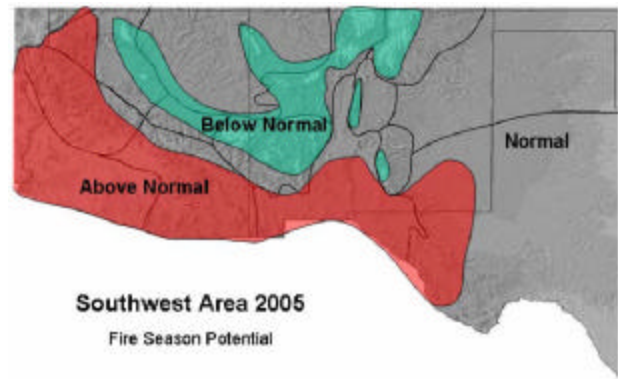


Spring was warmer than normal across most of the country except for cooler than average conditions east of the Mississippi. Much of the West was quite wet except for near normal to drier than normal weather in Arizona, Colorado and areas just east of the Continental Divide in Montana and Wyoming. It was one of the wettest springs recorded for Oregon, Idaho, Nevada and Utah but one of the driest springs from Texas to the Great Lakes. Alaska precipitation varied widely, but May was quite dry in the northeast interior of Alaska.

Despite a wet spring, the April 1st snowpack map (below) showed the Northwest with less than 50% of their normal snowpack and by May 1st, snowpack levels were less than 25% of normal. Meanwhile, the Sierra and Southwest saw snowpack exceed 150% percent of average.



The preliminary 2005 Southwest Area fire season outlook issued in early April predicted fire activity to be above normal in lower elevation areas occupied predominantly by grass and brush and below normal in the higher elevation mountain areas. Their fire season began in April, and by the end of May they had burned approximately 65% of their 10-year average acres.

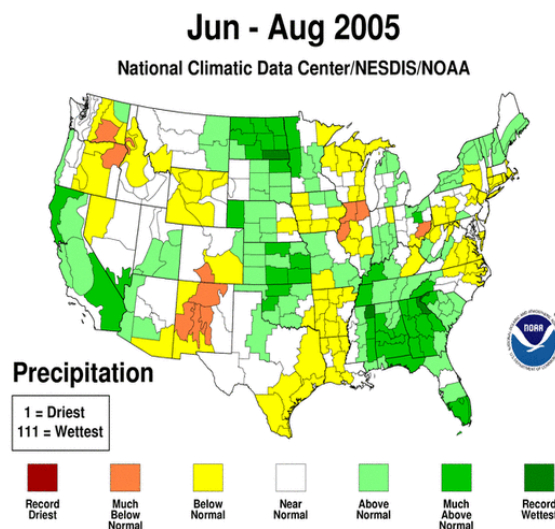
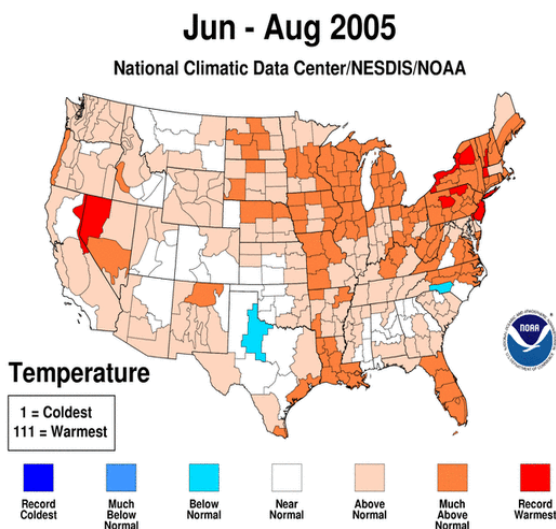


Wildfire activity increased significantly in the Southern Area during March with over 60 large fires burning approximately 125,000 acres by the end of the month. Thirteen large fires had also burned in the Eastern Area by the end of March. Large fire activity continued in both the Southern and Eastern Areas during April with significant large fire activity in the Southwest Area by late April. The first Type 2 Incident Management Team (IMT) deployment for the year occurred May 1st in Alaska. Fire activity was light during most of May with the Southwest Area being the most active. By the end of May, nationally we only had 75% of normal fires that had burned 50% of normal acres (based on the 10-year average from Situation Reports and ICS-209 data).

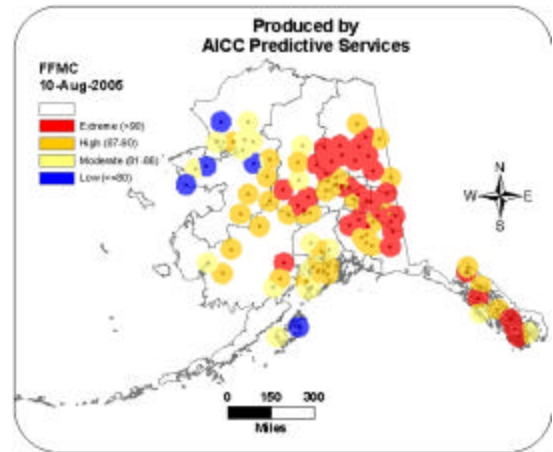
Summer (June – August)

The summer of 2005 began with a number of storm systems moving into the West delaying the development of the Four Corners high pressure system. Clockwise circulation around the Four Corners imports moisture from Mexico for the Southwest monsoon which normally begins in late June or early July. The delayed weather pattern resulted in one of the latest starting monsoon seasons on record with precipitation starting around July 18th. Due to a delayed and weakened onset to the monsoon, wildfire activity increased significantly in the Southwest Area during June and July. By the end of August the Southwest Area had burned 748,278 acres – approximately 208% of its 10-year average.

Elsewhere, temperatures were above normal across the country with Alaska experiencing its third warmest month on record, Nevada its tenth warmest and the Northeast its second warmest. Rainfall varied around the country with a wet summer in the Southeast, Central Plains and California. By contrast, the area east of the Cascades to Wyoming was very dry and Alaska was drier than normal.

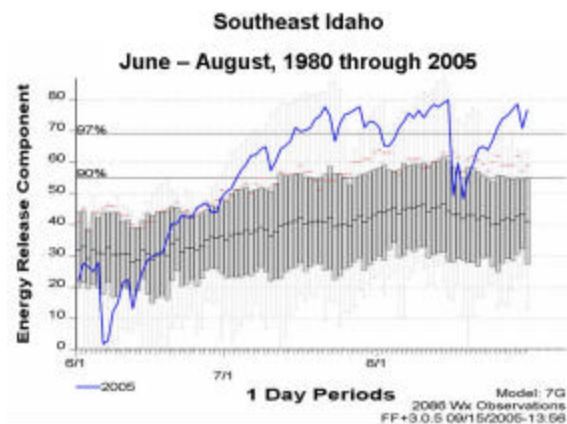


This year was exceptionally dry for north/central Alaska, with fires burning over 4.4 million acres, which is approximately 300% of average. Historically, major fire seasons in Alaska of more than 2 million acres have occurred about once per decade when the deep organic layers become dry and the fire season extends well into the summer months. However, more than 2 million acres have burned in the State in three of the last five years. By mid-August, fuel dryness indices (right) were either high or extreme over the majority of Alaska, with the worst conditions in the eastern/central region. It wasn't until the very end of August that sufficient rain fell to abate large fire growth and essentially put an end to fire season in Alaska.



In early June, the Great Basin experienced a number of large wildfires, mostly in the southern portions of Nevada and Utah. Fire activity was light to moderate elsewhere with several Wildland Fire Use fires being managed in the Southwest Area. As of June 23rd, the national preparedness level was PL 2 with 26 large fires reported on the Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) for a year to date figure of 27,906 fires reported for 745,959 acres. This was 69% and 70% respectively for the national ten year averages for fire and acres which 40,256 fires and 1,061,939 acres for the same date.

From June 24th to August 31st, portions of the Northwest, Great Basin, northern California, Idaho, and western Montana reported fire danger indices setting a 25-year record or near record. Even with these dry conditions, there were fewer fire starts from dry lightning events this year than normal, especially in many of the western states.



Large fire activity in the lower 48 states varied from light to quite heavy in Alaska during this time period. The number of fires was relatively small, but the acres consumed far exceeded the 10-year average.

This was primarily due to the number of rangeland acres consumed in the Eastern and Western Great Basin Areas and the number and size of fires in Alaska.

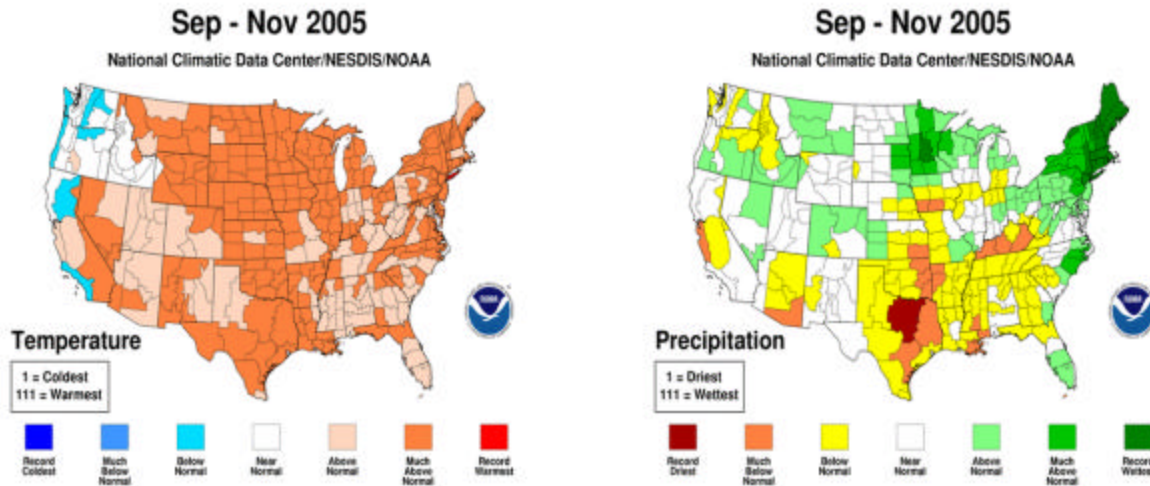
The Western Great Basin Area experienced 680 fires for 1,116,055 acres burned, or 251% of average acres burned. The Eastern Great Basin Area reported 1,672 fires for 820,458 acres burned, or 169% of average acres burned. The largest fire in the lower 48 states was the Southern Nevada Complex on the Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM which burned 508,751 acres before containment on July 7th. Alaska experienced 112% of the average number of fires, and 220% of the average number of acres by August 31st. Alaska's largest fire was the Nelson Mountain fire, which burned 244,600 acres.

Nationally, as of August 31st, a total of 45,645 fires and 7,416,384 acres burned were reported, which was 73% of the national average of fires but 182% of the average of acres burned.

Due to a delayed and weakened onset to the monsoon, wildfire activity had significantly increased in the Southwest Area during June and July. By the end of August the Southwest Area had burned 748,278 acres, or approximately 208% of its 10-year average.

Fall (September - November)

September through November was warmer than normal across the country except for cooler than usual weather along the West Coast. The fall was drier than normal weather over the southern tier of states with record wet conditions in the Northeast. The weak El Niño conditions (warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific) earlier in the year had faded by November with more normal conditions in place for the fall.



Fire Activity

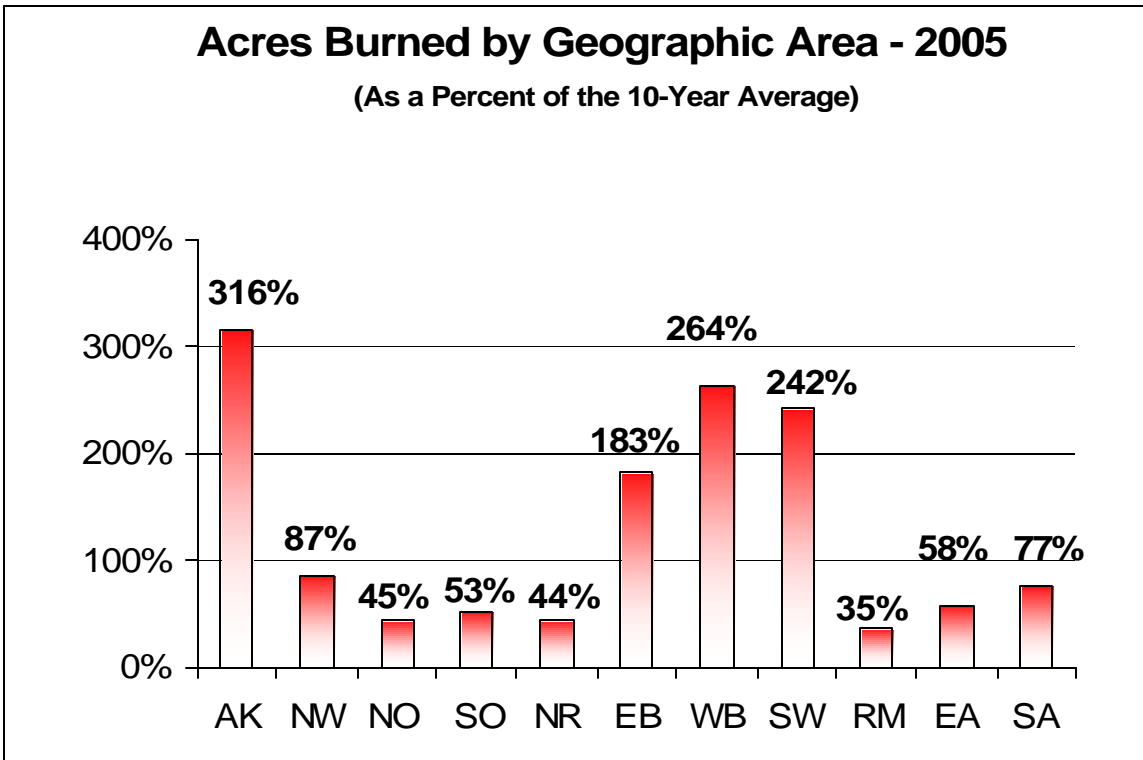
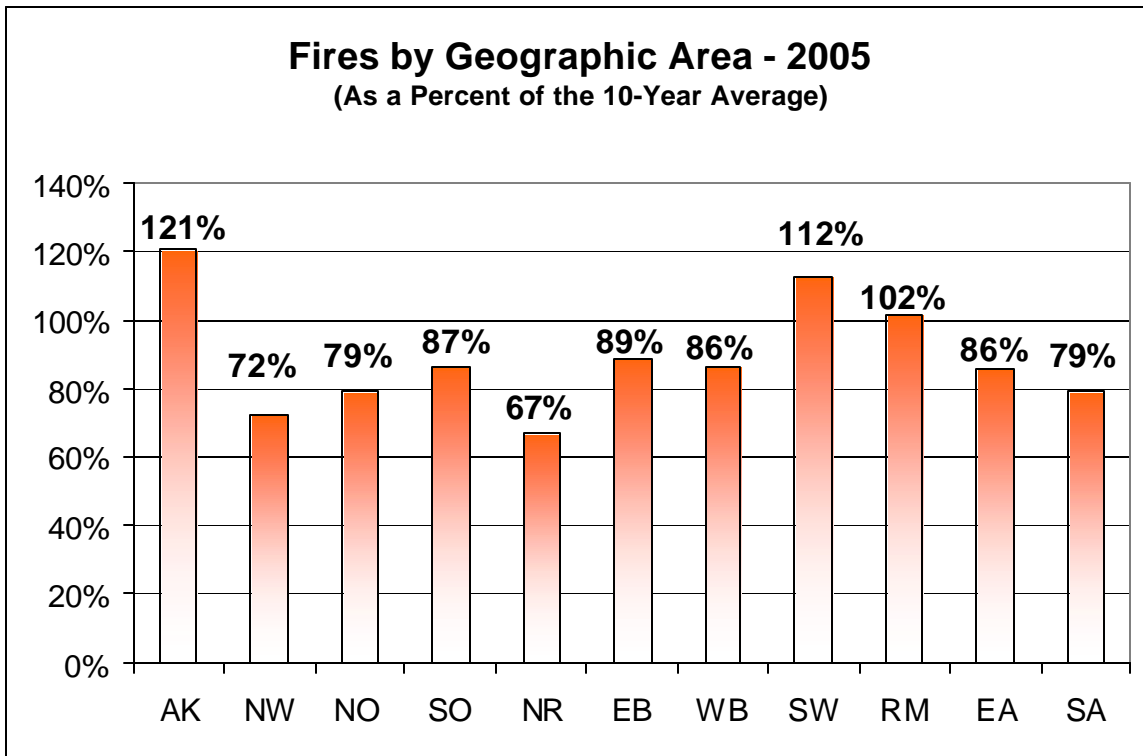
Fire season 2005 could be described as moderate in national resource commitments despite the record number of acres burned. Nationally, a total of 66,753 fires were reported for a total of 8,689,389 acres burned. The national 10-year average is 78,860 fires, resulting in 4,858,024 acres burned. Compared to the 10-year average, the 2005 fire season experienced just 85% of the average number of wildfires, but 179% of acres burned. Alaska again accounted for a substantial portion of acres burned, about 51% of the national total last year. Alaska typically burns 765,143 acres, or 17% of the nation's average total acreage (based on a 10-year average). Historically, the nation can expect an average of 70,744 fires for 3,703,080 acres burned (data from 1983 to 2004).

The highest number of fires reported in the lower 48 states occurred in the Southern Area, which reported 29,436 fires and 577,064 acres burned. The Western Great Basin Geographic Area experienced the highest number of acres burned (1,032,114 acres), but reported the lowest total number of fires in the lower 48 states (798).

Prescribed fire projects in 2005 were down slightly from last year, just 40% of the seven-year average. Accomplished acres were above the seven-year average by more than 300,000 acres.

A record number of Wildland Fire Use fires and acres burned in 2005; up 69% for WFU fires and 226% for acres burned over the seven-year average.

Fires and Acres



Fires Over 40,000 Acres in 2005

Name	GACC	State	Start Date	Contain / Control Date	Final Size **	Cause
Southern Nevada Complex	WB	NV	6/22/05	7/18/05	508,751	L
Cave Creek Complex	SW	AZ	6/21/05	7/11/05	248,310	L
Clover	EB	ID	7/15/05	7/21/05	192,846	L
Delamar *	WB	NV	6/28/05	8/9/05	170,089	L
Beaver Creek	AK	AK	6/20/05	8/25/05	167,766	L
Chapman Creek	AK	AK	5/30/05	7/9/05	162,670	L
Meadow Valley *	WB	NV	6/22/05	8/10/05	146,035	L
Esmerelda	WB	NV	7/15/05	7/28/05	115,000	L
Boundary Creek	AK	AK	7/12/05	8/23/05	113,463	L
Sheenjek River	AK	AK	6/12/05	7/10/05	107,240	L
Black Range Complex WFU	SW	NM	5/28/05	8/5/05	80,502	L
Talbiksok	AK	AK	8/2/05	8/28/05	76,369	L
Edge Complex	SW	AZ	7/15/05	7/30/05	71,635	L
Ray River	AK	AK	6/6/05	8/22/05	71,549	L
Hackberry Complex	SO	CA	6/22/05	7/6/05	70,736	L
Tank Complex	EB	AZ	7/19/05	7/27/05	69,934	L
Westside Complex	EB	UT	6/23/05	6/30/05	68,264	L
Coleen Mountain	AK	AK	7/24/05	8/28/05	65,261	L
Goldwater	SW	AZ	6/17/05	6/25/05	58,536	H
Wilson Complex	WB	NV	7/17/05	7/20/05	57,652	L
School Fire	NW	WA	8/5/05	10/1/05	49,515	UNK
Rupert	EB	ID	7/22/05	7/27/05	47,592	L
Grayling Creek	AK	AK	7/30/05	8/22/05	44,970	L
Frank Church	EB	ID	8/1/05	9/14/05	44,328	L
Fork	WB	NV	6/28/05	7/4/05	43,149	L
Tryon Complex	NW	OR	8/8/05	10/7/05	42,736	L
Valley Road	EB	ID	9/3/05	9/27/05	40,868	H

* These fires also became part of the Southern Nevada Complex

Cause: L= lightning H = human

** As reported in FAMWEB

National Preparedness Levels

The NICC remained at National Preparedness Level (PL) 1 until June 22nd when it was elevated to PL 2, where it remained until July 18th when it was elevated to PL 3. On September 1st the Preparedness Level was elevated to 4, largely due to increasing fire resource commitment to hurricane recovery efforts. The Preparedness Level was reduced to PL 3 on October 12th, and to PL 2 on October 15th, and finally back to PL 1 on November 1st. There were no days at PL 5 in 2005. (Refer to chart on page 30 for more information.)

As in 2004, NICC did not need to remain open twenty-four hours at any time in 2005.

Resource Mobilizations

Nationally, demand on fire fighting resources for fire suppression during 2005 was moderate in 2005. However, mobilization of wildland fire resources to hurricane events during late summer and fall was unprecedented. The NICC processed a total of 29,354 requests for resources in the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).

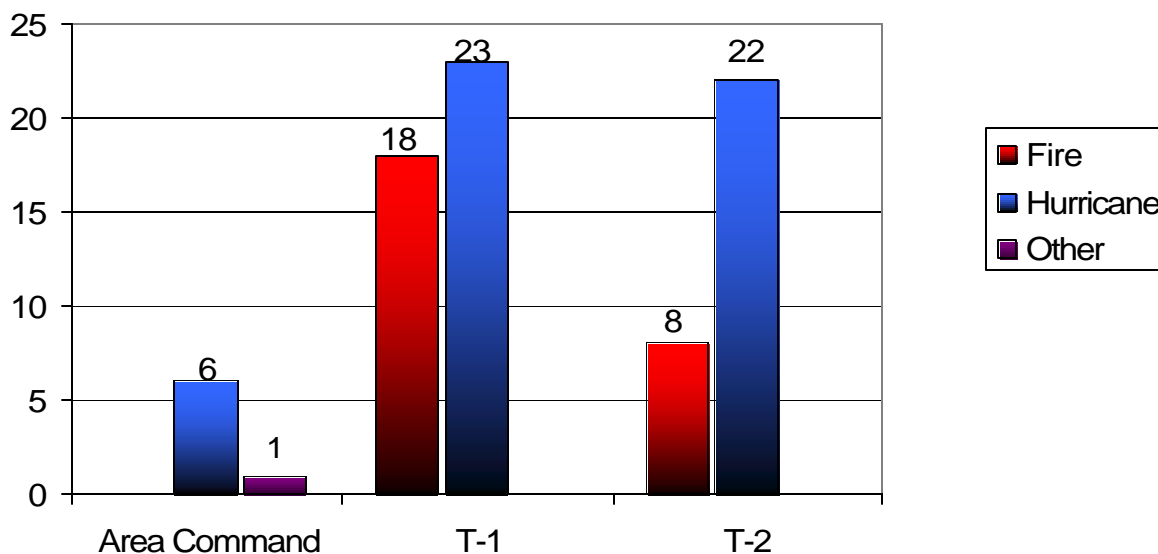
Alaska had another above average fire season, but demand for resources from the lower 48 states was not significant. Resources sent to Alaska included two CL 215 air tankers from Minnesota, and a Type 2 Incident Management Team from California. Through a compact agreement with Canada, two additional CL 215s were mobilized to Alaska during the summer, as well as an infrared fixed wing plane, which was processed through NICC and filled by CIFFC with an aircraft from Alberta.

Through agreements with the Canadian Province of Quebec, the northeastern states provided three state Type 2 crews that were mobilized through national agreements between NIFC and the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center (CIFFC). The Forest Service also provided a Type 2 crew to assist the Province of Quebec with its fire activity. The National Interagency Coordination Center filled one crew request from Canada this year, a Type 2 IA crew from New Hampshire.

Four military C-130 aircraft equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) were activated on May 21st. Operating out of the Boise Airtanker Base, the four aircraft flew 366 sorties for 510 flight hours, and delivered 879,034 gallons of retardant on 47 fires in Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Washington and Oregon. The last missions were flown on September 5th.

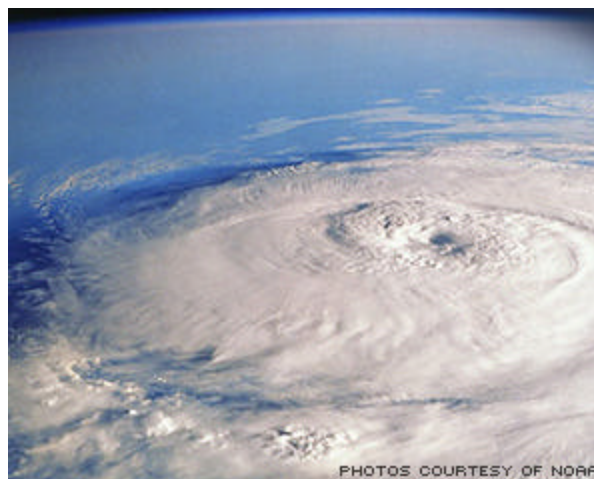
There were a total of 186 national Incident Management Team (IMT) assignments last year, 41 T-1 Team assignments, and 30 T-2 Team assignments (mobilized through NICC). Hurricane support and recovery accounted for 23 of the T-1 Team assignments, and 22 of the T-2 Team assignments. Four Area Command Teams were mobilized six times, providing nearly continuous hurricane support from late August to early November. There was only one other Area Command Team assignment in 2005, a Radio Communications assignment to Boise, Idaho.

National Team Assignments - 2005 (Mobilizations Through NICC)



Hurricane Support

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season was the busiest on record. There were 27 named storms, including 13 hurricanes, of which seven became major hurricanes (Category 3 or higher). Four of these major hurricanes (Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma) made landfall in the South, starting with Dennis on July 9th and ending with Wilma on October 24th. A fifth, Ophelia, was a Category 1 hurricane when it brushed the Carolinas in mid-September. Eleven federal disaster declarations were issued in six states as a result of these storms. Area Command and Incident Management Teams worked jointly with FEMA,



the military, state Emergency Response Teams, local authorities and relief agencies to provide assistance to stricken areas. Incident Management Teams were deployed in affected areas in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and Florida to set up and manage evacuation centers, relief supply distribution centers, and to provide support with planning and logistical operations. Additionally, a Type 2 Incident Management Team was mobilized to Phoenix, AZ, to manage an evacuee center. Other Team assignments included clearing debris, fire preparedness, planning and suppression in hurricane devastated areas. Other support assets mobilized through NICC for hurricane support included fifteen national Buying Teams, aviation assets, 32 caterers, 34 shower units and 26 camp crews were also mobilized. Fire resource commitment to hurricane support peaked in early October when more than 5,400 personnel, representing federal, state and local agencies, were assigned to relief operations.